



WYOMING DINOSAUR AND PALEONTOLOGY ATTRACTIONS

Wyoming Dinosaur Center (Thermopolis)

In 1993, fossil hunters noticed some bones sticking out of a mountainside. Little did they know, the discovery would lead to more than 80 identified dinosaur dig sites, 30 mounted dinosaurs, and over 1,000 total bones found. Long-necked sauropods, including an Apatosaurus, have been found in the thick mudstone layer called the Morrison Formation, which dates back to the Jurassic period. In addition to these longnecks, the Center is home to Jimbo, a 106-foot long Supersaurus; Stan, a 41-foot T. rex; two Velociraptors hunting the horned Protoceratops; and a specimen of the first true bird in the world. The Wyoming Dinosaur Center also offers Dig for a Day programs that allow visitors to get in on the hunt for the next big discovery!

Wyoming State Museum (Cheyenne)

The Wyoming State Museum, located in Wyoming's capital city, is an ideal place for dinosaur fans to get a thorough overview of Wyoming's paleontological history. Rex in Pieces is the museum's permanent dinosaur exhibit, highlighting the most prehistoric Wyoming creatures. It also features a cast of a full-sized Camptosaurus skeleton, one of the first dinosaurs found in the state.

The University of Wyoming Geological Museum (Laramie)

A 75-foot Apatosaurus skeleton, discovered in 1901 at Sheep Creek in Albany County, fills the exhibit hall at the University of Wyoming Geological Museum. The Apatosaurus is often considered the largest creature to ever live on land and would eat more than a ton of vegetation per day. This skeleton is just one of many highlights at this museum in Laramie. Guests can also visit "Big Al," the most complete Allosaurus fossil ever discovered. Other displays include Diatryma gigantea, Stegosaurus, Triceratops and Tyrannosaurus rex. Those interested in learning about the fossil preparation process can also stop by the museum's Prep Lab, a working exhibit where visitors can watch researchers at work and ask them questions.

Fossil Butte National Monument (Kemmerer)

Reaching a height of more than 7,500 feet above sea level, Fossil Butte National Monument serves as a 52-million-year-old classroom where visitors can discover fossils renowned for their preservation and diversity. Visitors can take a scenic drive, hike the Monument's trails, enjoy a picnic and see more than 300 fossils in the Visitors Center. The bright red, purple and yellow layers of the Wasatch Formation provide a unique backdrop while looking for fossils or participating in numerous kid's activities, including fossil artwork and preparation.

Glenrock Paleontological Museum (Glenrock)

In 1995, Glenrock's Director of Paleontology discovered Stephanie the Triceratops on a local ranch. Today, the Glenrock Paleontological Museum has grown to a 32,000-square-foot site that is continually adding fossils from the Cretaceous, Jurassic, and Oligocene periods. The Museum's collection of fossils contains rare species of marine reptiles, mammals and several types of dinosaurs including a Tyrannosaurus rex and a Hadrosaur. Visitors are also encouraged to walk through the Preparation Lab, where trained staff members explain the intricacies of fossil preservation.

Tate Geological Museum and Western History Center at Casper College (Casper)

Each summer, the Tate Geological Museum leads three Dinosaur Digs during which participants can spend a week excavating and collecting artifacts. One of the recent projects led to the excavation of Lee Rex, The T. rex. Visitors to the museum can learn about why Wyoming looks the way it does by examining a variety of rocks, minerals, meteorites and a large collection of Wyoming Jade. The Western History Center, also at Casper College, offers interpretive and hands-on activities for kids to learn about paleontology and how it fits into Wyoming's history.

Western Wyoming Community College Natural History Museum (Rock Springs)

The Natural History Museum at Western Wyoming College features a number of the dinosaurs that roamed the lands before humans. Visitors will feel a sense of wonderment while standing in the shadows of five life-size specimens including a triceratops, stegosaurus, and Tyrannosaurus rex. Several other exhibits and fossils of fish, reptiles and palm leaves complete this stunning collection.

Bighorn Basin Geoscience Center (Shell)

The Bighorn Basin, nicknamed the Real Jurassic Playground by paleontologists, is home to extensive fossil-bearing deposits dating back to the Cambrian Period. The Geoscience Center offers three-day workshops led by geoscientists that are open to the public. The workshops take place near Shell, just two hours from the east entrance of Yellowstone National Park.

Cottonwood Creek Dinosaur Trail (Alcova)

After a Casper 5th grade class discovered the bones of a Camarasaurus on a field trip, this trail was developed, taking hikers through the Sundance and Morrison Formations. These formations are known for their fossils, though visitors to this trail can collect only knowledge, not actual fossils or rocks. The trail itself winds for about one mile and summits over the Alcova Reservoir. Visitors can hike independently, or contact the Tate Geological Museum for guided tours.

Red Gulch Dinosaur Tracksite (Shell)

One visit to the Red Gulch Dinosaur Tracksite will have you imagining yourself walking along a shoreline 167 million years ago surrounded by dinosaurs. Until the Tracksite was discovered in 1997, scientists thought that the entire area had been covered by an ancient ocean called the Sundance Sea. Instead, scientists now believe that the tracks were made by two-legged dinosaurs, perhaps walking along the shore looking for meals left behind by the last high tide.

Washakie Museum and Cultural Center (Worland)

For more than 25 years the Washakie Museum and Cultural Center has housed several exhibitions about the historical animals and environment surrounding the Big Horn Basin. One of the two permanent exhibitions includes The Ancient Basin, a collection of elaborate illustrations and casts of dinosaurs, including a six-foot Eocene bird, Deinonychus; a fierce carnivore; and Carpolestes, a tiny creature that is thought to be one of the first primates to walk the Earth. There are audio and video guides throughout the museum, making it interactive for children and adults.

Ulrich's Fossil Gallery (Kemmerer)

Ulrich's Fossil Gallery provides visitors of all ages the chance to explore numerous displays of fossil fish before going on a guided dig with transportation and tools provided. Visitors on the fossil fishing expeditions will find one-of-a-kind souvenirs to take home with them.

Paleo Park (Newcastle)

Paleontologists have been hunting for dinosaur fossils at Paleo Park, part of the Zerbst Ranch, since the early 1900s. Two fairly complete triceratops skeletons have been found and, in keeping with tradition, both were named after fourth-generation members of the family, Kelsey and Lane. Today, visitors can help the family find fossils by joining the two-hour tour offered by appointment only.

Greybull Museum (Greybull)

Ammonites are a predatory squid-like animal that lived in coiled shells and used their tentacles to capture fish and crustaceans. At the Greybull Museum, visitors can view ammonite fossils up to five feet in diameter. The Museum also boasts an outstanding collection of agate, fossils and polished tree sections that date back millions of years.

Warfield Fossil Safari (Kemmerer)

Not far from the Fossil Butte Monument is a private quarry at Warfield Springs where guests can take part in a Fossil Safari. The well-preserved fossils found in the quarry are from the Green River Formation and are between 40-60 million years old. Many fossils that are found by in the quarry are collected and prepared for private and public collections worldwide.

Bliss Dinosaur Ranch (Weston)

With 3,500 acres in the Hell Creek formation, the Bliss Dinosaur Ranch welcomes guests to stay for two- to three-day hunts to dig for fossils of the more than 300 species of animals and dinosaurs on the property. The ranch's owner, Frank Bliss, who has a master's degree in geology and has been collecting for more than 15 years, guides all hunts, and all hunters go home with teeth or bones that they discovered themselves. Frank has found fossils and bones of many dinosaurs, including Triceratops, Tyrannosaurus rex and Pachycephalosaurus.

Blue Moon Quarry (Kemmerer)

Just a few miles west of Kemmerer in the northern part of the Green River Formation is Blue Moon Quarry where visitors can dig for fossils. The 7,100 ft. quarry is operated by Promise Land Fossils and has fossils of various species of turtles, fish, birds and insects. The property, which overlooks part of Fossil Butte National Monument, is open to scheduled digs between April and October.

Tynsky's Fossil Fish (Kemmerer)

Just east of Fossil Butte National Monument, Tynsky's Fossil Fish offers visitors several hands-on dig opportunities each day along with tours of the dig site. Common fossils found at the site include Diplomystus, an extinct fish with an upturned mouth found in the Green River Formation, and Priscacara, an extinct ancestor or perch resembling a sunfish-like body. To schedule a dig, call (307) 877-6885.

